

A Tibetan Guide-book to the lost Sites of the Buddha's Birth and Death.—
By L. A. WADDELL, M.B., LL.D.

[Read, August, 1896].

I am surprised that no one seems to have noticed that the Aṣṭka-edict-pillar, which was found three years ago in the Nepalese *tarai* by a Nepalese officer on a shooting excursion, has an importance far beyond that of its own mere inscription, interesting as that is, for it supplies a clue to the hitherto undiscovered birth-place of Çākya Muni, which after Bōdh-Gayā was perhaps the most celebrated Buddhist shrine, and which at Hiuen Tsiang's visit in the 7th century A.D., contained magnificent structural remains including several inscribed Aṣṭka-pillars and a monastery with 3,000 monks; and its exploration must throw a flood of light on the origin of the Çākya race and other problems of those almost prehistoric times in which Buddhism had its first beginnings.

This pillar of Kōṃākamana in the Nepalese *tarai*, appears still to be fixed in its original position; and that most trustworthy topographer, Hiuen Tsiang, records that the 'city' of Kapilavastu lay within seven miles or so to the north-west of this very identical pillar.¹ Fa Hian also states that that town lay one *yōjana* (about 7 miles) to the west of the *stupa* of this pillar.²

This important indication which this new Aṣṭka-pillar affords, struck me at once on reading Professor Bühler's translation of its inscription in the *Academy* of April 27th of 1895; but I find that the full official report on the pillar contains no reference to the indications which this pillar supplies us with in regard to the site of Kapilavastu and its suburbs.

It is true that General Cunningham and one of his most incompetent assistants, some years ago claimed to have discovered this long lost city in the village of Bhula in the Basti district of the N.-W. Provinces; but that this identification was altogether false, like the General's identification of the not far distant Kasiā as the site of the Buddha's death, must

¹ Beal's *Si-yu-ki*, II. 19.

² *id.*, I, xlix.

immediately be evident to anyone who takes the trouble to look into his reports on the subject and to compare these with the accounts of Hiuen Tsiang and Fa Hian, which are our chief guides on this question. Not only are its position, topography, and surroundings quite out of keeping with the recorded description, but no characteristic structural remains were obtained on digging.

Now, however, we seem to have in this Nepalese pillar a guide to carry us to the very spot.

This pillar of the shrine of the Buddha Kōṇākamana lies in the Nepalese *tarai* near the village of Niglivā, thirty-eight miles north-west of Uska on the Bengal and North-Western railway, in the north of the Gōrakhpur district of the N.-W. Provinces. The ruins of the town of Kapilavastu ought therefore to be found within about 6 or 8 miles to the north-west of this pillar, (30 *li* to the S.-W. and thence 50 *li* to the N.) The Lumbinī garden should lie a little to the north; and about 5 miles (30 *li*) to the south-west should be found the old town of 'Napiki' with the relic-stupa of the Buddha Krakucchanda, which also has its inscribed Aṣōka-pillar.¹

In this connection, I have found in the possession of a Tibetan Lāma, a guide-book to the Buddhist shrines of India which also places Kapilavastu near the hills on the frontier of Nepal. This guide-book is in MS., Tibetan, and its author has apparently not visited India himself. It is compiled, he says, partly from the records of Hiuen Tsiang and the Indian 'Gau-pan,' and partly from hearsay narratives of pilgrim monks. But its chief value lies in the fact that it gives the relatively modern names of towns and rivers *en route*. It has no date, probably it is not more than a few centuries old. I here extract the paragraphs bearing upon the sites in question:—

"Going from that place (Banaras) not far to the north-west is the country of Kōsala, now called 'Tikṣa' or 'Ayōdhya,' situated on the bank of the river named 'Dhou-ha' (? Dewa) or 'Sarjapu.' Here in this country was the great city of Ārāvastī,² containing the palace of King Prasēnajit, but now traces only remain of the fort, which is called Kōsala-purī. Inside the fort are traces of the stupa built over the seat of the Guide (the Buddha) when he preached here, and also several other stupas founded by the faithful ones. On either side of the eastern gate of the city, is a long stone about fifteen fathoms.³ A little further off is a gilded brass⁴ image of the Guide in a great brick building, but I have not heard clearly whether it still exists. To the south of the city about four or five hour's walk there is the

¹ Beal *id.*, II., 18.

⁵ ཏོམ་ 'Dom.

² མནལ་ཡོད་ *mNan-yod.*

⁴ གསར་བཟུང་ *gSar-bzay.*

Vihāra of Jētavana where the past Buddhas preached. Near that place is a well where the Buddha washed his hands and there is also a dwelling where the revered Āṣiputra humbled the pride of the miracle-worker Māudgalyāputra.

“Three or four hours journey to the north-west of Jētavana, is a dwelling called ‘the eye-seeing shrine’¹ where traces of the Guide and of the revered disciples are said to remain up till now. To the north-west of that place and north of Ayōdhya is a great fort called ‘Kha-nou.’ In the eastern portion of the Jēta forest is a shrine where the Buddha preached to the infidels, and several other shrines at each of which king Aṣōka is said to have built a stupa.

“From here, eight or nine days journey to the east, stands the city of Kapila, the birth-place of our Guide. It was called ‘Kapila’ or ‘the tawny colored town;’² at present it is called ‘Jaṣa-sipata’ or ‘the dwelling of victory.’³ One (to reach it) goes through a country where there is a new city called ‘Shi-kanta-pura’ on the bank of the river Rōhita which flows from the north-east to the south-west. On the northern (or to the north of the) bank of the river Rōhita are the towns called ‘Kachi-li-bin,’ and ‘Bal-po-garh’ (which literally means the Nepalese fort, but it may be intended for ‘Balaul-garhi’ or ‘Pāl-pa’ of the Nepal sub-Himalayas due north of Gōrakhpur), and the hill of the ‘Thag-po’ country.⁴ Not far from that hill is a small city called ‘(r) Do-na-ko-ta’ (or ? Āṣanakōṭa),⁵ from which after two or three hours walk to the west, are the traces of Kapila city (? now) called Kapila-di (? dih), which is described by Gau-pan and in the travel-records of Thaṅ-ziṅ (Hiuen Tsiang) and in several *sūtras*.

“In the middle of the city are traces of the palace of Āṣuddhōdana, with an image of the king. Near the palace is also an image of the queen Mahāmāyā (? now) called Mahā-yōgini. Near that place is the dwelling where the Guide was born, with his image. North-east of that place is a stupa erected by Aṣōka where the king was given a name by the Rṣis. In each of the four gates of the city is an image of the ‘Youth Siddhārtha,’⁶ with a picture of the miseries of birth, old age and sickness, and of death, and of the (happiness of the) ascetic. In the north-west of the city is a shrine where the Āṣakya (youths) were drowned⁷ by ‘Virūdhaka.’ The many hundred and thousands of the stupas of their bones as described by Thaṅ-ziṅ were seen by some Ācāryas. Outside the southern gate of the city is a stupa erected at the spot where the Buddha

1 མཐོག་མཐོང་གི་ལྷ་ཁང་ Mig-mthoñ-bahi-gnas.

2 Ser-skyā-i-groṅ.

4 Thag-po-yul.

6 Don-grub.

3 rGyal-bahi-gnas.

5 rDo-na-ko-ta.

7 sNub.

when young disputed with the Çākya tribe. Near that stupa is the 'Elephant-pit,' beside which are images of king Siddhārtha, Yaçōdhara, and prince Rahula, as described in the register. And lately the traveller Lālagi has visited them, and seen feasts held there by the people every eight days.

"Not far from the city, towards the south is a great temple with a stone image of the Yakṣa, 'Increase'¹, in a standing posture, this was visited by some Ācāryas.

"One morning's walk to the south of that place is a well which is now called 'Bhagavan-suvadi,' in which it is said whoever bathes is freed from disease.

"Half a day's journey to the south of that place are the shrines of the previous Buddhas Kōṇākamana and Krakuchanda where they were born, as described by Thaṅ-ziṅ (Hiuen Tsiang).

"Again' from the above-mentioned Bhagavan-suvadi, half a day's journey to the north-east is the 'Lambuna' forest, not far from which is the 'Açvō-tha' tree which was held by the right hand of the Guide's mother when he was born.

"North-east of that place is a farm called 'Sahāpara' by the Nepalese, beyond which a little farther is a small country, thought to be 'Kaputa.'"

"From that place, north-east is a thick-forest called 'Jahri-ban,' beyond which after a little more than one day's march is Camaladesh' or 'Bāliya-dēç' or 'the powerful country.' In the north-west of this country is the river 'Jahrena' on the bank of which is the Sāl forest under the shade of one of the trees of which the Guide died, in a lying posture with his head directed towards the north, as described by Thaṅ-ziṅ (Hiuen Tsiang).

"Not far east of this is the relic of the Guide which the Indians call 'Krayāta.' Here is an extensive tract of ground of a yellowish-earth where the faithful ones sometimes find pieces of relics about the size of a small grain as described by the Indians.

"To the north of Kapila and 'The Intestine'² country and near Nēpāl is the city of 'Mu-kham-bu-ra' where there is a fortress called 'Mukhyi-drava,' from which, I am told by Lakshināra Singh, (the countries of) Kapila and Magadha may be seen.

"Further east is the country of 'Bhidhiya' (= Bettiah), where in the city of 'Janakapuri' is a bow and arrow of king Rāma. To the east of the palace of the king of this country, after about three days journey, we came to a road which leads to Nēpāl or 'Nam-khu.'

¹ Tibetan 'P'el.Skt. *Vardhamāna*.

² T. *gYod-yul*.

“Not far east from the country of Vaiçāli, is the country called Tirhut which is the permanent residence of the King of Vaiçāli. To the north of that country, but slightly south of Nēpāl is the city of ‘Mulkara,’ to the south-east of which is the ‘Mourang’ (= Morang the Nepalese *tarāi* to the North of Purneah) where abound elephants, peacocks and the *rudrākṣa*¹ trees. East of this is a great city called ‘Sahesa-ganj’ (Saifganj formerly a large town in Purneah District founded by a Muhammadan governor named Saif) which is near to the country of Sikhim.² East of that place (Saifganj) is the river Kauçikā (the Kūsi), beyond which is Koch Behara (‘Kuch Bihār’).”

I believe that Kusinagara, where the Buddha died may be ultimately found to the North of Bettiah, and in the line of the Aṣṭka-pillars which lead hither from Patna (Pāṭaliputra).

¹ *Elæocarpus janitrus*, the warty seeds of which are used for Sivaist and Lamaist rosaries.

² ‘Bās-mo-ljoṅs, or ‘the country of rice.’

